



The State of Working Britain

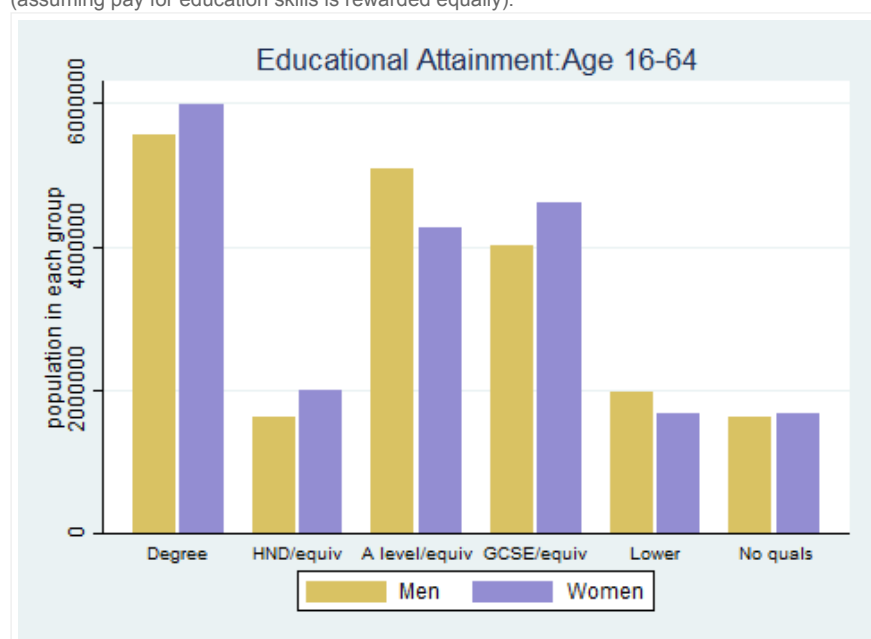
Friday, 11 March 2016

SWOB 7:International Women's Day: Reasons to be (a little bit) cheerful about women in the UK labour market, 1, 2, 3

On Tuesday, International Women's Day, the Fawcett Society published a [review](#) of the the progress (or otherwise) of women in the UK labour market. Their central finding was that women - in full-time work - earn significantly less than men which can amount to some £3000,000 over a working lifetime. Clearly while the gender pay gap has narrowed over the years, something still needs to be done. Here, however, are 3 features of the labour market where women have done relatively well recently (according to the Labour Force Survey data).

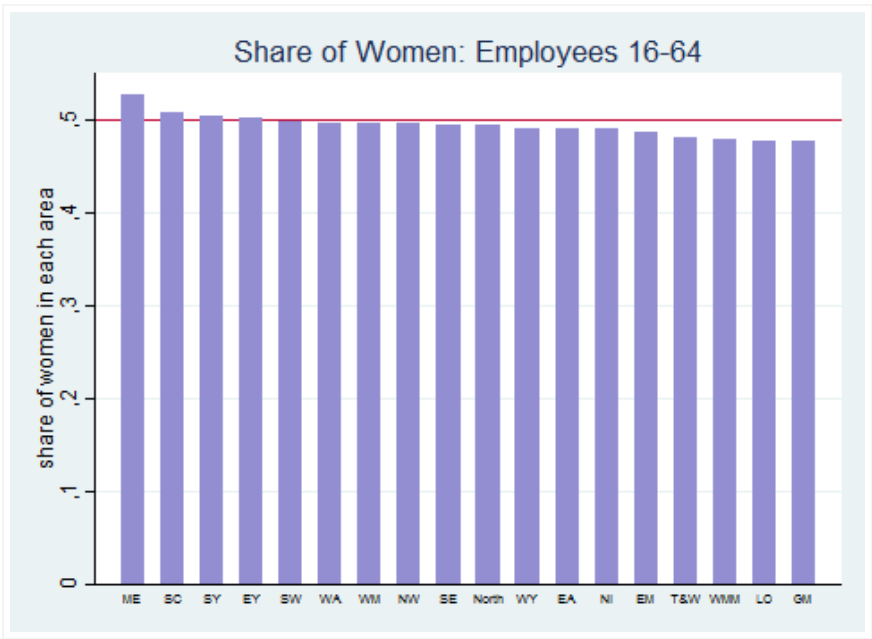
1. Women are now more educated than men. It's official

The graph below shows the number of men and women (aged 16-64) by educational attainment. There are now more women educated to degree or further education level than men. Successive waves of undergraduate entries in which women have been in a majority mean that there are now 6 million female graduates in the population and 5.5 million male graduates. Similarly for further education. This can only help narrow pay differentials in the future (assuming pay for education skills is rewarded equally).

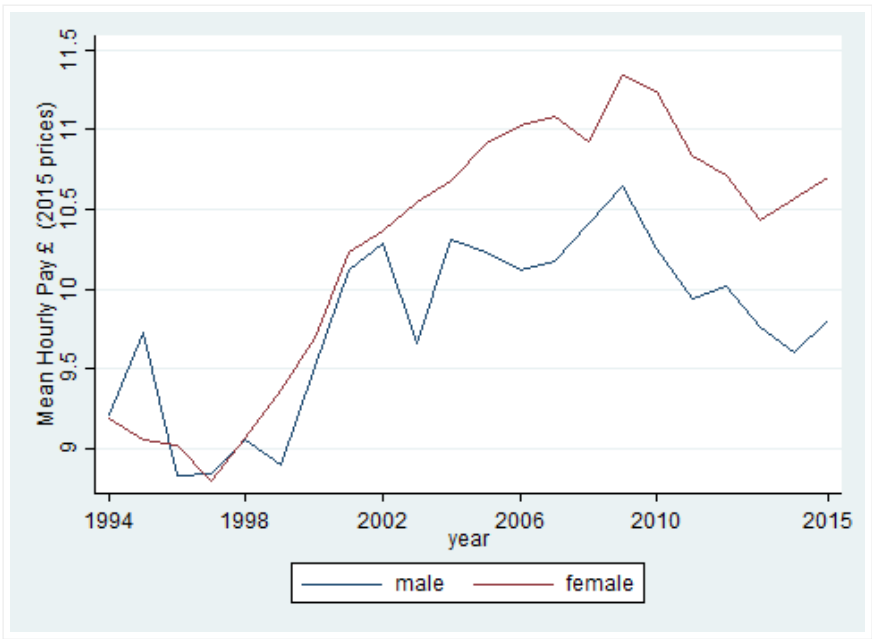


2. Women are now a majority of employees in several areas of the UK

Rising participation for women and stagnant participation of men have combined so that women are the majority of employees (but not all employed, self-employment is still male dominated) in South Yorkshire, East Yorkshire, Merseyside and Scotland. Indeed women now make up the majority of **all** the employed in Merseyside. Some of this is undoubtedly due to years of industrial decline and the loss of male dominated sectors, but the consequences have - so far - been to feminise the workforce.



3. The Gender Pay Gap has long since disappeared in Part-Time Work
Indeed there is a premium to being female and working part-time. (though this goes to zero when differences in part-time working by age, qualification and region across gender are accounted for) So the main issue here is now no longer gender based, but instead why part-time jobs are paid so poorly relative to full-time jobs. Progress (of sorts)



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